

den hem, and retornen to the frut of vertu, whan they studien to ben unlyk to hem that they han hated. Certes, only this is the diuine might, to the whiche might yveles ben thanne gode, whan it useth tho yveles covenably, & draweth out the effect of any gode; as who seyth, that yvel is good only to the might of God, for the might of God ordeyneth thilke yvel to good.

FORoon ordre embraseth alle thinges, so that what wight that departeth fro the resoun of thilke ordre which that is assigned to him, algates yit he slydeth into another ordre, so that nothing nis leueful to folye in the reame of the diuine purviaunce; as who seyth, nothing nis withouten ordinaunce in the reame of the diuine purviaunce; sin that the right stronge God governeth alle thinges in this world, for it nis nat leueful to man to comprehendyn by wit, ne unfolden by word, alle the subtil ordinaunces and disposicions of the diuine entente. for only it oughte suffice to han loket, that God himself, maker of alle natures, ordeineth and dreseth alle thinges to gode; whyl that he hasteth to withholden the thinges that he hath maket into his semblaunce, that is to seyn, for to withholden thinges into good, for he himself is good, he chaseth out al yvel fro the boundes of his comunaltee by the ordre of necessitee destynable, for which it folweth, that yif thou loke the purviaunce ordeininge the thinges that men wenen ben outrageous or haboundant in erthes, thou ne shalt nat seen in no place nothing of yvel. But I see now that thou art charged with the weighte of the questioun, & wery with the lengthe of my resoun; and that thou abydest som sweetnesse of songe. Tak thanne this draught; and whan thou art wel refresshed & relect, thou shal be more stedefast to styte into hereye questioniuns.

Metre VI.
Si vis celsi jura tonantis.

IF thou, wys, wilt demen in thy pure thought the rightes or the lawes of the heye thonderer, that is to seyn, of God, loke thou and bihold the heightes of the soverain hevvene. There kepen the sterres, by rightful alliaunce of thinges, hir olde pees. The sonne, ymooved by his rody fyr, ne distorbeth nat the colde cerele of the mone. Ne the sterre yeleped The Bere, that enclyneth his ravissching courses abouten the soverain heighte of the worlde, ne the same sterre Arsa nis nevermo wasshen in the depe westrene see, ne coveiteth nat to dey in his flaumbes in the see of the occian, al

thogh he see othre sterres yplounged in the see. And Hesperus the sterre bodeth & tellet alwey the late nightes; & Lucifer the sterre bringeth ayein the clere day.

AND thus maketh Love entrechaunge able the perdurable courses; & thus is discordable bataile yput out of the contree of the sterres. This acordance aments, that the moiste thinges, stryvinge stoundes; & the colde thinges joynen hem by feyth to the hote thinges; and that the lighte fyr aryseth into heighte; and that the hevvy erthes avalen by hir weightes. By this same causes the floury yer yildeth warminge; and the hote somer sesoun cornes; & autumpne comth ayein, hevvy of apples; and the fleting reyn bidweth the winter. This atempraunce norisseth and bringeth forth al thing that bretheth yf in this world; & thilke same atempraunce, ravissching, hydeth and binimeth, and drencheth under the laste deeth, alle thinges yborn.

AMONGES these thinges sitteth the heye maker, king and lord, welte and biginninge, lawe & wys juge, to don equitee; and governeth and enclyneth the brydles of thinges. And tho thinges that he stereth to gon by moovinge, he withdraweth and aresteth; and affermeth the moeable or wandringe thinges, for yif that he ne clepede ayein the right goinge of thinges, and yif that he ne constreinede hem nat eftsones into roundnesse enclynede, the thinges that ben now continuued by stable ordinaunce, they sholden departen from hir welte, that is to seyn, from hir biginninge, and faylen, that is to seyn, tome into nought.

THIS is the comune Love to alle thinges; and alle thinges axen to ben holden by the fyn of good, for elles ne mighten they nat lasten, yif they ne come nat eftsones ayein, by Love retorned, to the cause that hath yeven hem beinge, that is to seyn, to God.

Prose VII.
Jamne igitur vides.

EESTOW NAT thanne what thing folweth alle the thinges that I have seyde? **B**oce. What thing? quod I. Certes, quod she, al outrely, that alle fortune is good. And how may that be? quod I.

NOW understand, quod she, so as alle fortune, whether so it be joyeful for tune or aspre fortune, is yeven either by cause of guerdoning or elles of exercysinge of good folk, or elles by cause to punysshon or elles chastysen shrewes; thanne is alle fortune good, the whiche fortune is certain that it be either rightful or elles profitable.

FORSOTHE, this is a ful verray resoun, quod I; & yif I consider the purviaunce and the destinee that thou taughtest me a litel herbiform, this sentence is sustened by stedefast resouns. But yif it lyke unto thee, lat us noumbren hem amonges thilke thinges, of whiche thou seydest a litel herbiform, that they ne were nat able to ben wened to the poeple. Why so? quod she. For that the comune word of men, quod I, misuseth this maner speche of fortune, & seyn ofte tymes that the fortune of som wight is wikkede. Altitow thanne, quod she, that I aproche a litel to the wordes of the poeple, so that it seme nat to hem that I be overmoche departed as fro the usage of mankind. As thou wolt, quod I. Demestow nat, quod she, that al thing that profiteth is good? Vis, quod I. And certes, thilke thing that exercyseth or corigeth, profiteth. I confesse it wel, quod I. Thanne is it good? quod she. Why nat? quod I. AC this is the fortune, quod she, of hem that either ben put in vertu and batailen ayeins aspre thinges, or elles of hem that eschuen & declynen fro vyces and taken the wey of vertu. This ne may I nat denye, quod I. But what seystow of the mery fortune that is yeven to good folk in guerdoun? Demeth aught the poeple that it is wikked? Nay, forsothe quod I; but they demen, as it sooth is, that it is right good.

AND what seystow of that other fortune, quod she, that, although that it be aspre, & restreimeth the shrewes by rightful torment, weneth aught the poeple that it be good? Nay, quod I, but the poeple demeth that it is most wretched of alle thinges that may ben thought. War now, & loke wel, quod she, lest that we, in folwinge the opinioun of the poeple, have confessed and concluded thing that is unable to be wened to the poeple. What is that? quod I.

CERTES, quod she, it folweth or comth of thinges that ben graunted, that alle fortune, whatsoever it be, of hem that ben either in possessioun of vertu, or in the encrese of vertu, or elles in the purchasinge of vertu, that thilke fortune is good; and that alle fortune is right wikkede to hem that dwellen in shrewednesse; as who seyth, and thus weneth nat

the poeple. That is sooth, quod I, albeif so that no man dar confesse it ne biknowen it.

WHY so? quod she; for right as the stronge man ne semeth nat to abaissen or disdaignen as ofte tyme as he hereth the noise of the bataile, ne also if ne semeth nat, to the wyse man, to beren it grevously, as ofte as he is lad into the stryf of fortune. For bothe to that oon man and eek to that other thilke difficultee is the matere; to that oon man, of encrese of his glorious renoun, and to that other man, to conforme his sapience, that is to seyn, to the asprenesse of his estat. For therefore is it called Vertu, for that it susteneth & enforseth, by hise strengthes, that it nis nat overcomen by adversitees. Ne certes, thou that art put in the encrese or in the heighte of vertu, ne hast nat comen to fleten with delices, and for to welken in bodily luste; thou sowest or plauntest a ful egre bataile in thy corage ayeins every fortune: for that the sorwful fortune ne confounde thee nat, ne that the mery fortune ne corumpe thee nat, occupye the mene by stedefast strengthes. For al that ever is under the mene, or elles al that overpasseth the mene, despyseth welefulnesse (as who seyth, it is vicious), & ne hath no mede of his travaille. For it is set in your hand (as who seyth, it lyth in your power) what fortune yow is levest, that is to seyn, good or yvel. For alle fortune that semeth sharp or aspre, yif it ne exercyse nat the gode folk ne chastyseth the wikked folk, it punisseth.

Metre VII.
Bella bis quinque operatus annis.

THE wreker Attrides, that is to seyn, Agamenon, that wroughte and continuede the batailes by ten yer, recovered & purgede in wrekinge, by the destruccioun of Troye, the loste chaumbres of mariage of his brother; this is to seyn, that he, Agamenon, wan ayein Eleyne, that was Menelaus wyf his brother. In the mene whyle that thilke Agamenon desirede to yeven sayles to the Grekissh navye, and boughte ayein the windes by blood, he unclothede him of pitee of fader; & the sory preest yiveth in sacrificinge the wretched cuttinge of throte of the daughter; that is to seyn, that Agamenon let cutten the throte of his daughter by the preest, to maken allyaunce with his goddes, & for to han winde with whiche he mighte wenden to Troye.

TACUS, that is to seyn, Alixes, biwepte his felawes ylorn, the whiche felawes the ferse Doliphemus, lig-